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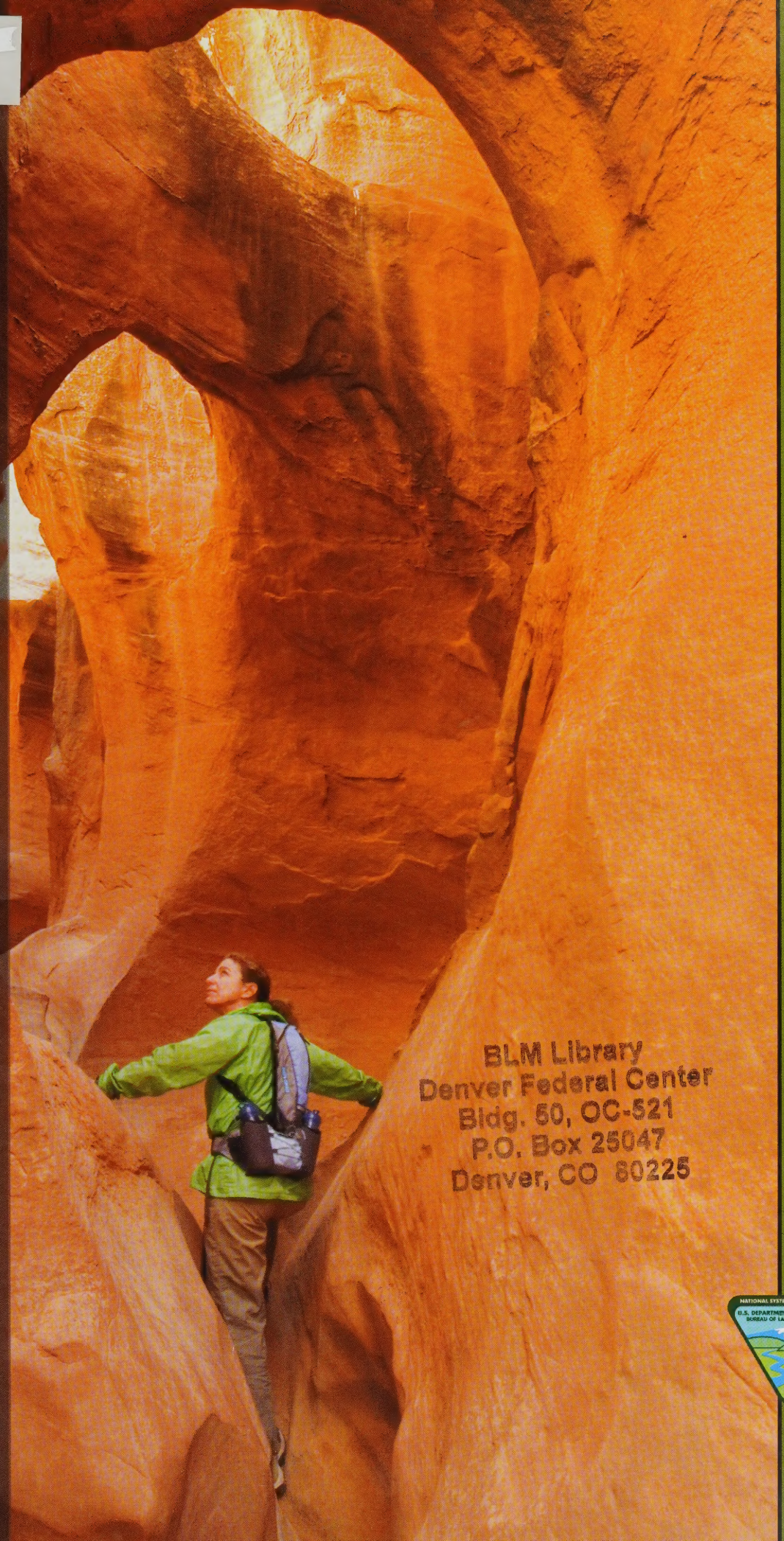
The NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM

15-Year Strategy 2010-2025



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The Geography

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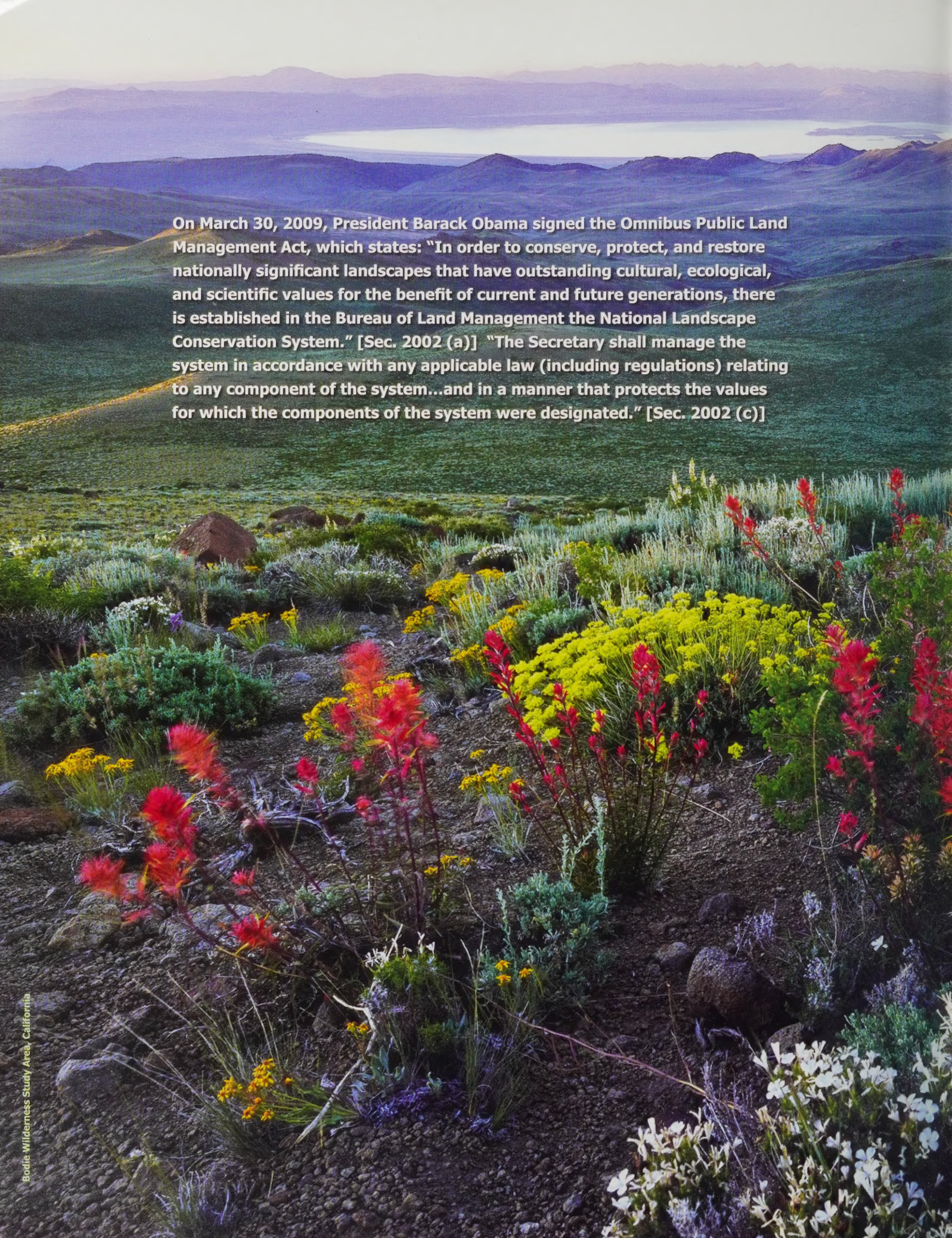

On March 30, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, which states: "In order to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations, there is established in the Bureau of Land Management the National Landscape Conservation System." [Sec. 2002 (a)] "The Secretary shall manage the system in accordance with any applicable law (including regulations) relating to any component of the system...and in a manner that protects the values for which the components of the system were designated." [Sec. 2002 (c)]

Bodie Wilderness Study Area, California

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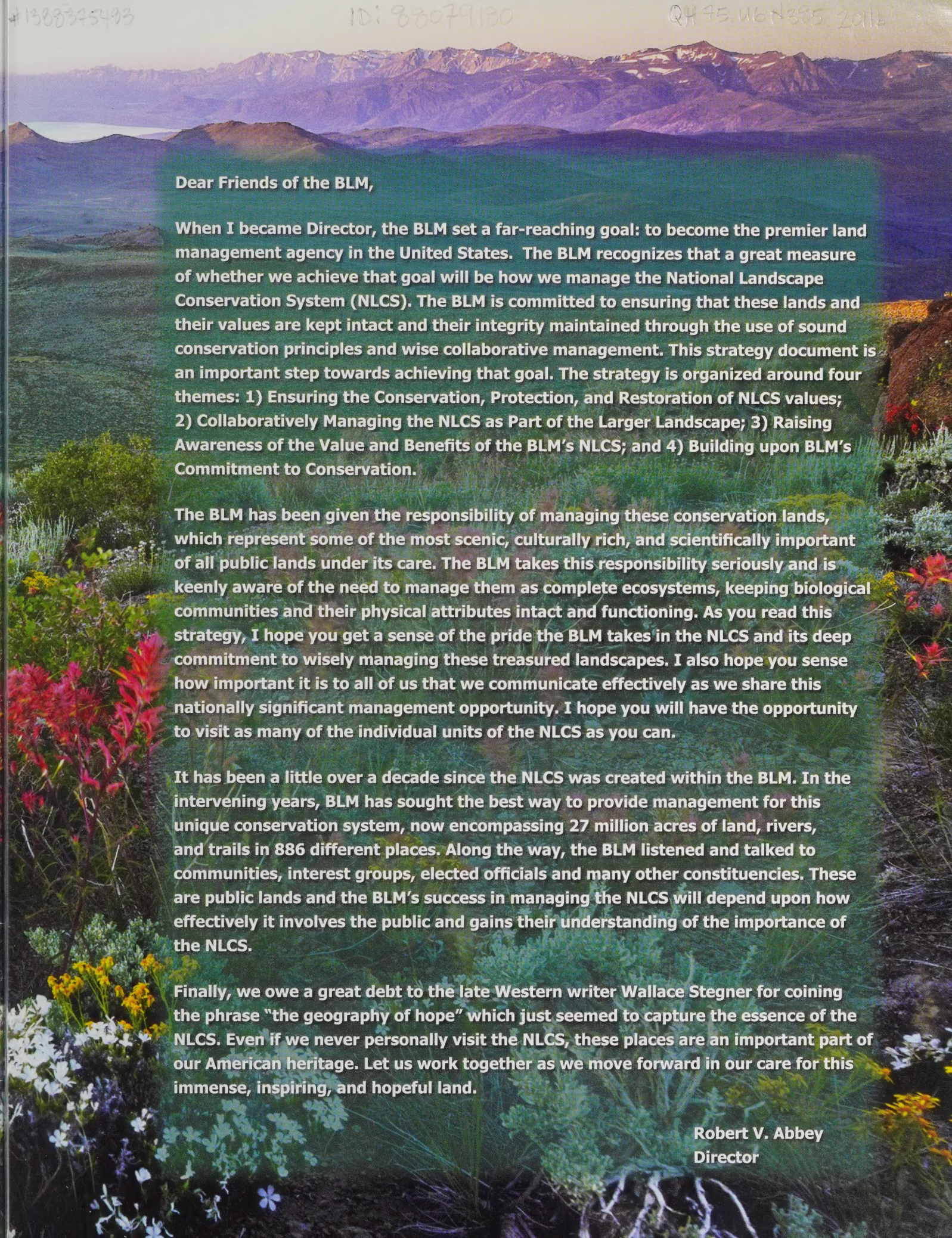


Dear Friends of the BLM,

When I became Director, the BLM set a far-reaching goal: to become the premier land management agency in the United States. The BLM recognizes that a great measure of whether we achieve that goal will be how we manage the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The BLM is committed to ensuring that these lands and their values are kept intact and their integrity maintained through the use of sound conservation principles and wise collaborative management. This strategy document is an important step towards achieving that goal. The strategy is organized around four themes: 1) Ensuring the Conservation, Protection, and Restoration of NLCS values; 2) Collaboratively Managing the NLCS as Part of the Larger Landscape; 3) Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of the BLM's NLCS; and 4) Building upon BLM's Commitment to Conservation.

The BLM has been given the responsibility of managing these conservation lands, which represent some of the most scenic, culturally rich, and scientifically important of all public lands under its care. The BLM takes this responsibility seriously and is keenly aware of the need to manage them as complete ecosystems, keeping biological communities and their physical attributes intact and functioning. As you read this strategy, I hope you get a sense of the pride the BLM takes in the NLCS and its deep commitment to wisely managing these treasured landscapes. I also hope you sense how important it is to all of us that we communicate effectively as we share this nationally significant management opportunity. I hope you will have the opportunity to visit as many of the individual units of the NLCS as you can.

It has been a little over a decade since the NLCS was created within the BLM. In the intervening years, BLM has sought the best way to provide management for this unique conservation system, now encompassing 27 million acres of land, rivers, and trails in 886 different places. Along the way, the BLM listened and talked to communities, interest groups, elected officials and many other constituencies. These are public lands and the BLM's success in managing the NLCS will depend upon how effectively it involves the public and gains their understanding of the importance of the NLCS.

Finally, we owe a great debt to the late Western writer Wallace Stegner for coining the phrase "the geography of hope" which just seemed to capture the essence of the NLCS. Even if we never personally visit the NLCS, these places are an important part of our American heritage. Let us work together as we move forward in our care for this immense, inspiring, and hopeful land.

Robert V. Abbey
Director

Handies Peak Wilderness Study Area, Colorado

BLM National Landscape Conservation System Strategy: The Geography of Hope

"Those who haven't the strength or youth to go into it... can simply contemplate the idea, take pleasure in the fact that such a timeless and uncontrolled part of earth is still there.... We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope."

Wallace Stegner, "The Sound of Mountain Water"

Mission and Vision for the NLCS

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) mission for the NLCS is to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes and places that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations.

The BLM's vision for the NLCS is to be a world leader in conservation by protecting landscapes, applying evolving knowledge, and bringing people together to share stewardship of the land.

Components of the NLCS

As defined by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, the NLCS includes the following areas administered by the BLM:

A. National Monuments.

B. National Conservation Areas.

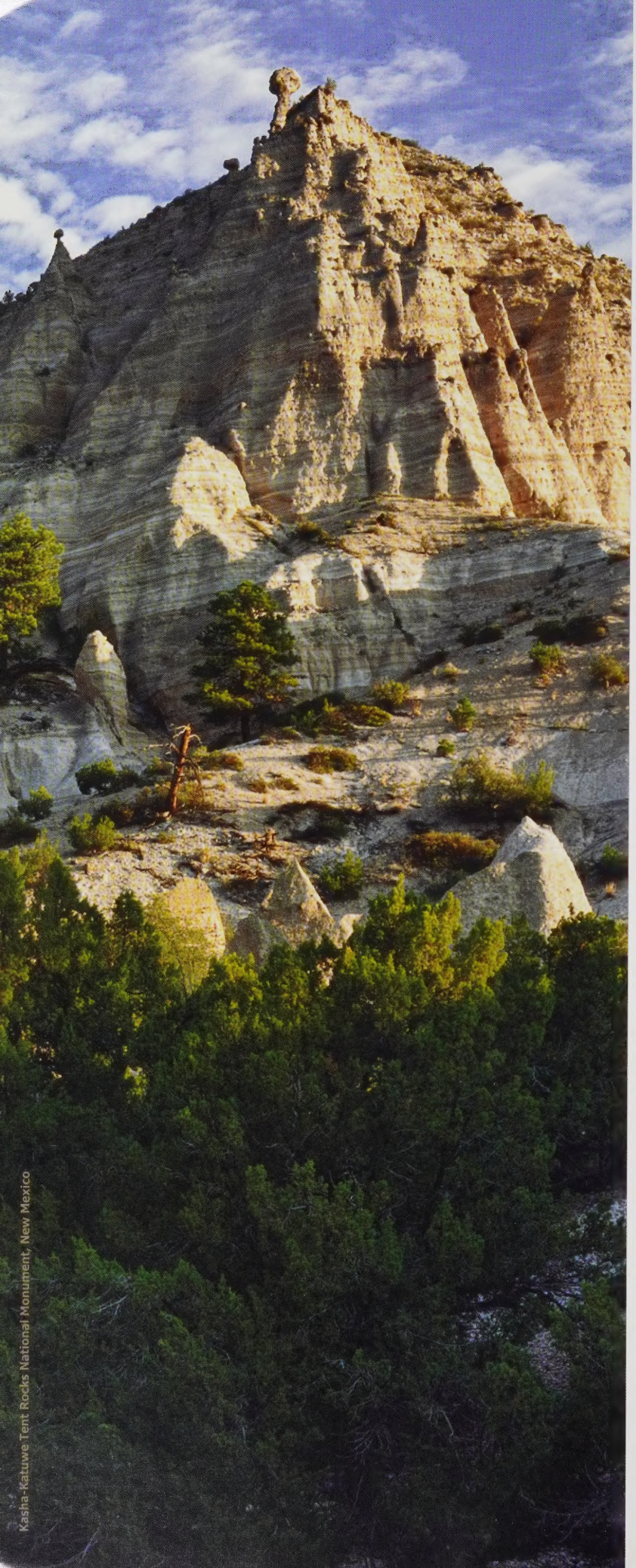
C. Components of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

D. Wilderness Study Areas.

E. Components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

F. National Scenic Trails or National Historic Trails Designated as Components of the National Trails System.

G. Any area designated by Congress to be administered for conservation purposes.



Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, New Mexico

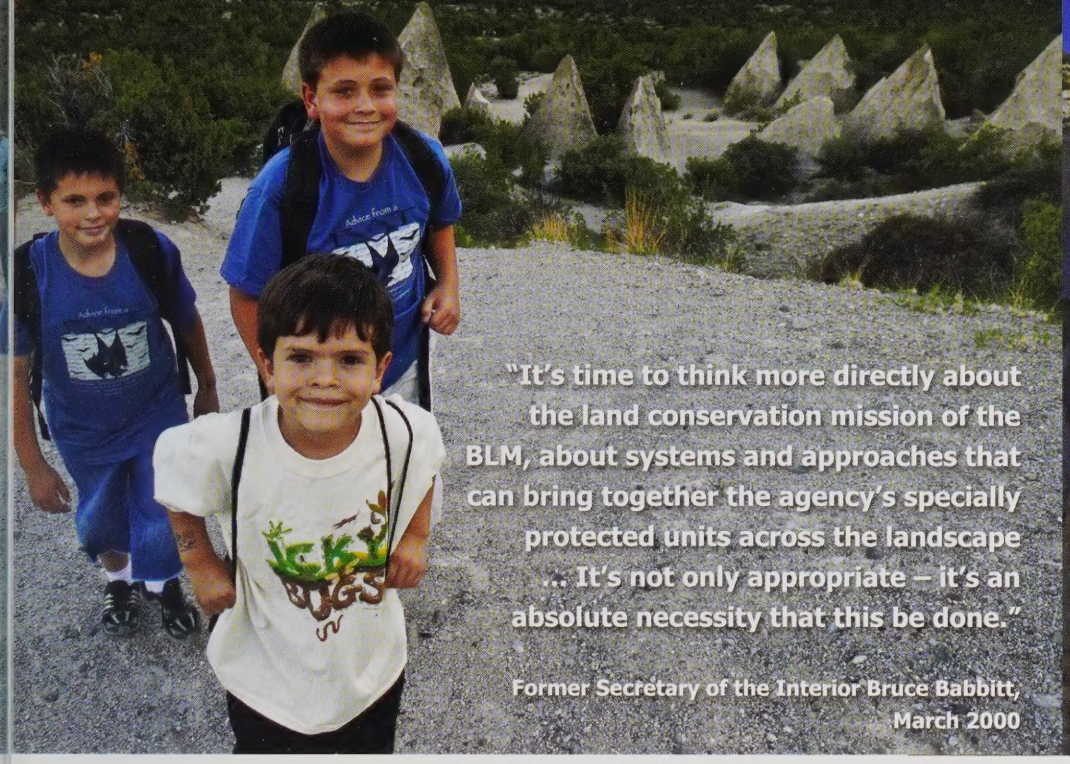
The Geography of Hope

The BLM's NLCS encompasses some of the most scenic, culturally rich, scientifically important and least-known of all public land in America. What sets these lands apart is more than their special designation as part of the NLCS. It is also the inspiration they evoke.

It's the awe visitors experience when they watch the dropping sun wash Sunset Arch in Utah in reds and corals. It's the feeling of peace that creeps over them when they see the morning light on the rugged spires of the Eagletail Mountains of Arizona. It's the exhilaration they experience viewing the Trinity River in California thrashing its way seaward, or breathing in the salt-tinged air at the Yaquina Head Lighthouse on the Oregon coast. It's the sense of history that ignites while hiking through the Upper Missouri River Breaks and realizing the country looks much the same now as when Lewis and Clark passed through more than 200 years ago, or while viewing the intricate pueblo dwellings in Colorado inhabited by Native Americans a millennium ago.

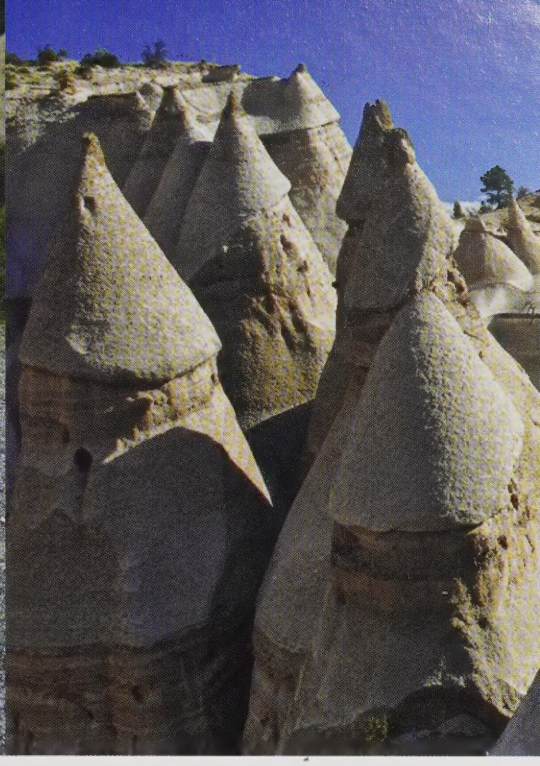
Add it up and take note: The NLCS turns people toward hope – hope for the present, hope for the future, hope that wild places and cultural resources and traditions will continue to exist and inspire; that they will provide open spaces and broaden our understanding, and nudge us toward renewal and refreshment. The NLCS helps to reassure us that the wild country and legacy of those who went before us will carry on, for those who can explore these beautiful places and even for those who only glimpse at their edges. Although he coined the phrase long before the notion of an NLCS was born, author Wallace Stegner's simple words, "the geography of hope," may best capture the significance of the 27 million acres that comprise the system.

Often, NLCS lands are working lands as well. The NLCS is not separate and apart from the mainstream of BLM-managed lands. NLCS land is connected to other efforts and activities – recreation, wildlife, botany and other like disciplines; and linked to minerals, energy, grazing and other uses. NLCS fills a vital niche for the American public. The BLM makes the NLCS better through its commitment to landscape conservation, and the BLM is a better, more complete agency because of the NLCS – and the hope that this system brings.



"It's time to think more directly about the land conservation mission of the BLM, about systems and approaches that can bring together the agency's specially protected units across the landscape ... It's not only appropriate – it's an absolute necessity that this be done."

Former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, March 2000

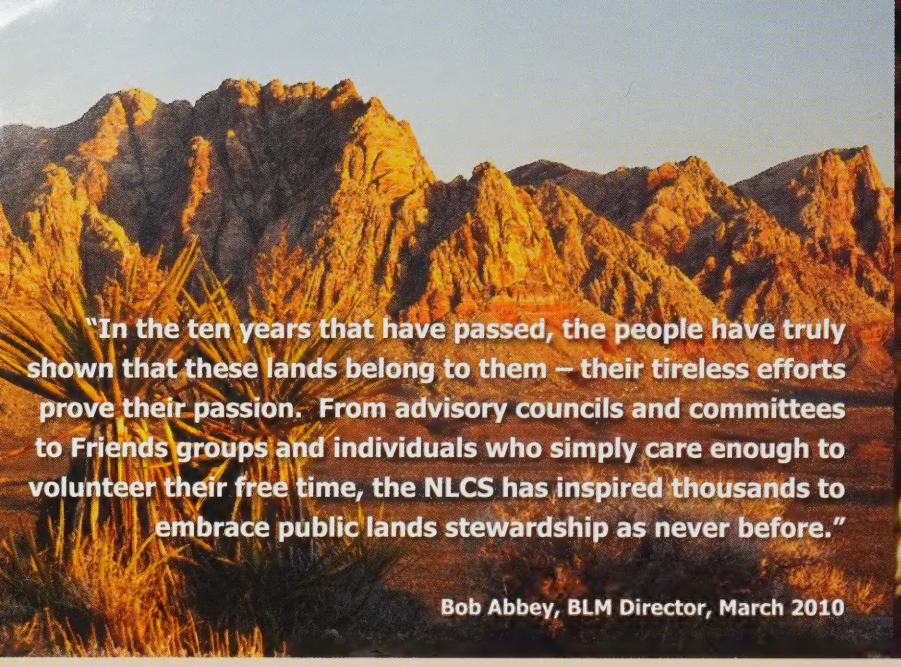


The Beginnings of NLCS

The NLCS was created in 2000, but its roots go back further. The beginnings of the NLCS may be traced to 1970, when Congress created the King Range National Conservation Area (NCA) on the northern California coast and gave the BLM responsibility for its management. BLM's authority to protect natural and cultural resources was fortified by passage of the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) which set the BLM on an interdisciplinary course of multiple-use and sustained-yield management, "... in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource and archeological values."

Former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt became a believer in BLM's ability to manage land with outstanding values during a trip to Southern California's Mojave Desert in 1993.

Over the next several years following the trip, Secretary Babbitt continued to work with the President, Congress, and local communities to designate additional areas through legislation or presidential proclamation, with one important change. Instead of transferring these special places to another agency, the BLM was to retain stewardship over the designated areas and be given the chance to demonstrate its capability to manage, in concert with the public, the stunning landscapes of the West. The concept of a special BLM system of lands with a dominant conservation mission began to take shape, culminating in a Secretarial Order signed in 2000. In that Order, Secretary Babbitt created the National Landscape Conservation System within BLM to include lands, rivers, and trails designated by acts of Congress or presidential proclamations under authority of the 1906 Antiquities Act. Bipartisan passage of the "Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009" (Appendix 1) permanently established the NLCS "... to conserve, protect and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations." This philosophy continues today under Secretary Ken Salazar and the President's America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative which recognizes the importance of the NLCS.


"In the ten years that have passed, the people have truly shown that these lands belong to them – their tireless efforts prove their passion. From advisory councils and committees to Friends groups and individuals who simply care enough to volunteer their free time, the NLCS has inspired thousands to embrace public lands stewardship as never before."
Bob Abbey, BLM Director, March 2010

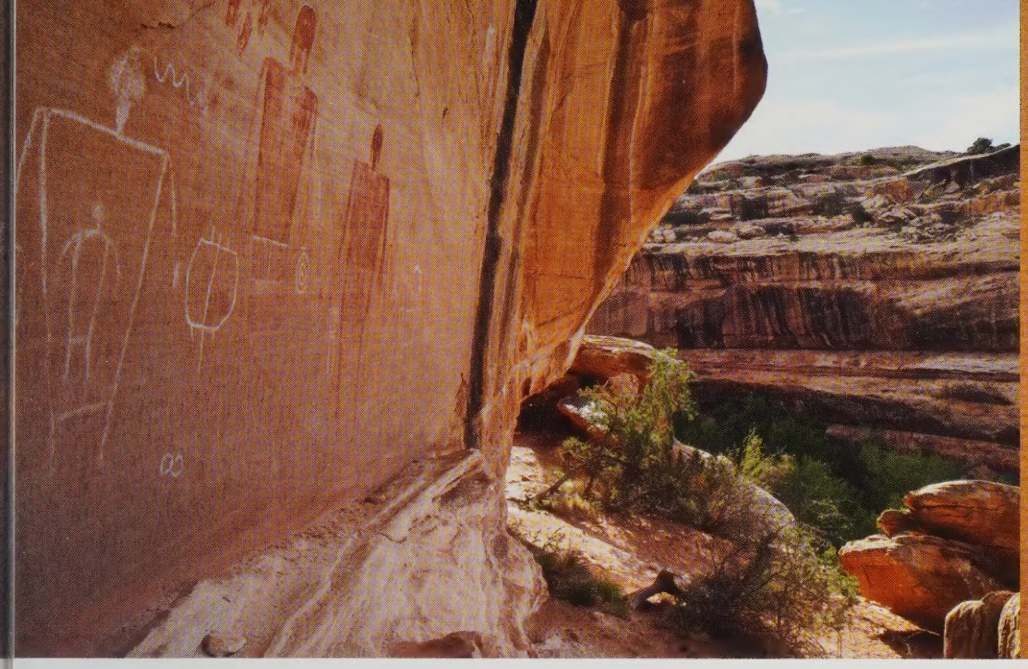
The NLCS and BLM: Conservation for the 21st Century

The BLM is steward to many great American landscapes. Among the 245 million surface acres the agency manages, most are west of the Mississippi River. The BLM also manages 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate located throughout the country. The uses of these lands are many – livestock grazing, energy development, minerals, forest products, rights-of-way, Native American traditional uses, recreation, wildlife habitat, and conservation. With that diversity of needs and uses comes a tall order: The BLM is responsible for balancing this formidable mix of practices to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public land for present and future generations. All the pieces add up to a dynamic, challenging and rewarding system of public land management.

FLPMA requires that land be managed under the principles of multiple-use and sustained-yield. Multiple-use management is not for the faint of heart. Almost by definition, it entails competition and choices, necessitating the need for clear thinking and sound decisions. It's a huge undertaking to continually assess the compatibility of various uses, all the while keeping in mind that the resources and uses must be sustainable over the long term. Multiple-use does not necessarily translate to management that provides the greatest economic return. Rather, the focus of multiple-use is managing resources in the combination that best meets the current and future needs of the public.

So where does the NLCS fit and how does the balancing act required by multiple-use and sustained yield principles affect the NLCS? The authors of FLPMA included an astute exception: Management activities must abide by those principles, except "...where a tract of such public land has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law it shall be managed in accordance with such law" (FLPMA, as amended, Public Law No. 94-579, Title III, Sec. 302(a)). That means in some places, conservation may be elevated over development or production if a law identifies conservation as the primary use for which the land is designated. On the protection end of the multiple-use spectrum, NLCS areas are designated by act of Congress or presidential proclamation (in accordance with the 1906 Antiquities Act) to conserve, protect, and restore specified natural and cultural values. This strategy carries these ideas forward particularly in Theme 1, which addresses the primacy of conservation, consistent with the designating legislation or presidential proclamation within NLCS areas and Theme 4, which seeks to internally build upon BLM's commitment to conservation. The NLCS, in which conservation and resource protection is the primary purpose, is meant to complement BLM's management of public lands.

Valid existing rights are honored, and the designating legislation or proclamation may specify allowable uses such as grazing, oil and gas development, and recreation or uses that are not allowed. Beyond that, the BLM may consider other uses within the NLCS to the extent they are in harmony with the conservation and protection of NLCS objects and values.



"The establishment of the National Landscape Conservation System was a major step forward in recognizing lands of exceptional beauty, historical value, and cultural significance that are under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. Through effective, forward-looking stewardship, the BLM will protect and preserve these treasured landscapes as a legacy for the American people."

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, March 2010

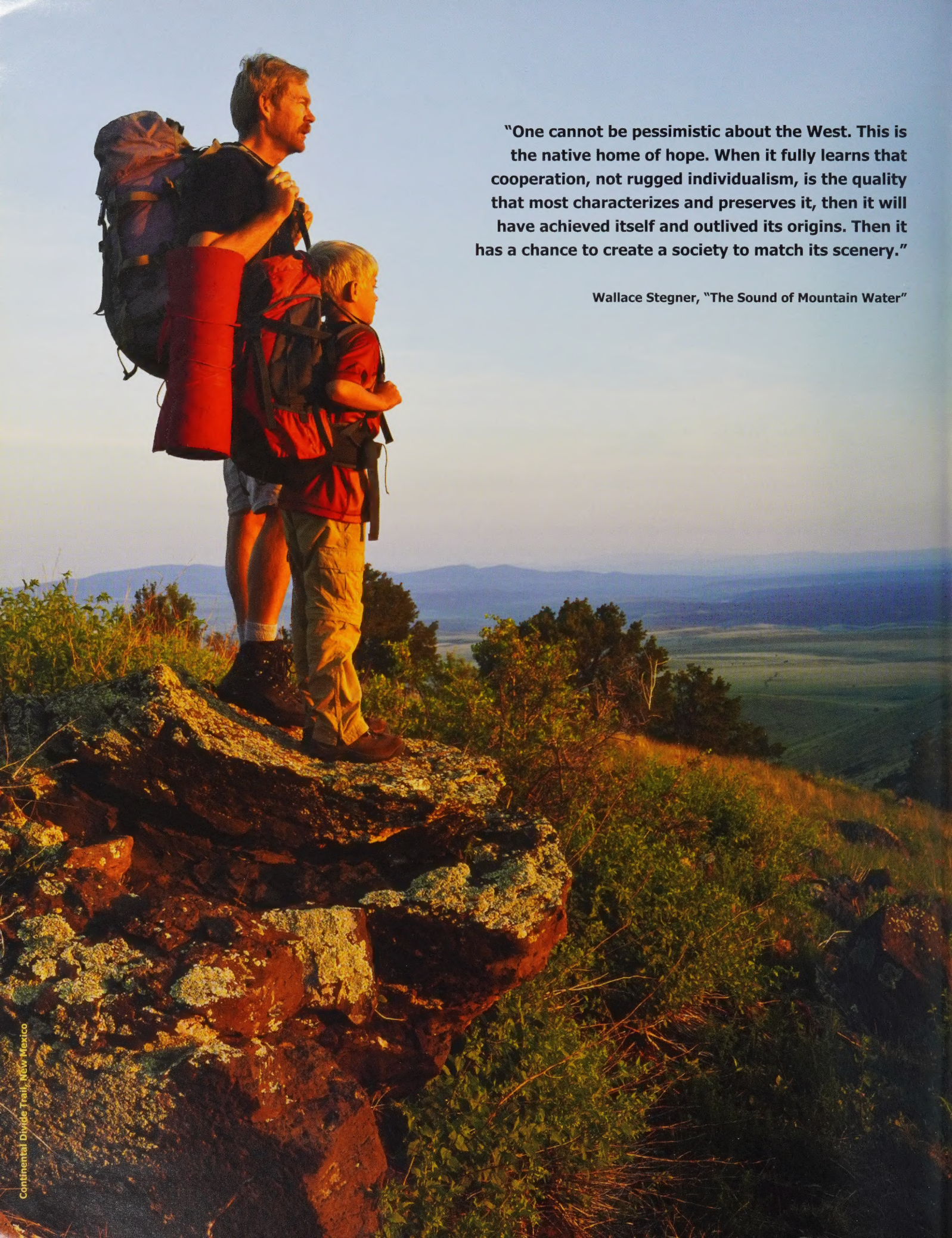
The NLCS Conservation Model: Looking Forward, in Partnership

The NLCS represents a model in which landscape-scale conservation can be achieved through shared stewardship. To carry out its NLCS mission, the BLM seeks the help of tribes, communities of interest and place, Friends groups, recreationists, ranchers, business interests, universities, and others to assist in managing for conservation in the context of a larger working landscape and to respect the unique and diverse opportunities that result from these national treasures. This strategy emphasizes the importance of shared stewardship in Theme 2, which addresses collaborative management and Theme 3, raising public awareness of the value and benefits of the NLCS.

As the West continues to urbanize, a growing number of citizens are drawing attention to the importance of preserving the last remnants of open space. The future of conservation in America requires us to work in collaboration with tribes, communities, and stakeholders to manage whole landscapes. As Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar noted in his remarks at the NLCS Summit in 2010, "These truly are America's public lands, established and guided by the voices and helping hands of stakeholders, partners, tribal nations, elected officials and many, many others. Only with the engagement, support, and investment of the American people can our public lands fulfill their potential for our communities and our country."

Among federal agencies, the BLM is well-suited to work in concert with those who understand the importance of conserving America's natural and cultural heritage. That's because of the vastness and geographical range of the public land it manages and the relationships BLM employees have forged through the agency's multiple-use mission. Each working day, employees throughout the organization cultivate relationships with communities; use an interdisciplinary, science-based approach to decision-making; and build collaborative paths to planning and land management. The BLM has a long history of working closely with partners and communities to pursue a shared vision of the future.

That spirit of cooperation will continue and, it is hoped, expand as a result of this strategy. Taking the best cooperative practices from the past and combining them with the best of the present and future will become standard practice for all land within the system. The BLM is continually evolving, as it seeks to be a transformative force in public land management. The NLCS provides hope, optimism, and confidence to both members of the public and those within the BLM who have a hand in managing these areas. Together, they will continue to work toward making the NLCS the premier conservation management system in the nation.



"One cannot be pessimistic about the West. This is the native home of hope. When it fully learns that cooperation, not rugged individualism, is the quality that most characterizes and preserves it, then it will have achieved itself and outlived its origins. Then it has a chance to create a society to match its scenery."

Wallace Stegner, "The Sound of Mountain Water"

Continental Divide Trail, New Mexico

NLCS Strategy Themes and Goals

This strategy reflects the best of the ideas and suggestions offered by the public and BLM employees and incorporates the requirements of Secretarial Order 3308 (Appendix 2), the America's Great Outdoors Report, the Department of the Interior Strategic Plan for 2011-2016, and other sources. The result is a strategy that is integrated and interdisciplinary in nature, will assist in NLCS budget development in the coming years, and will help BLM employees select what work is most important within individual NLCS units. The strategy is organized into four major themes:

Theme 1	***Ensuring the Conservation, Protection, and Restoration of NLCS Values.*** Primacy of conservation within the NLCS, how science serves to further conservation, and to provide for compatible use that protects NLCS resources and values.
Theme 2	***Collaboratively Managing the NLCS as Part of the Larger Landscape.*** Building a better conservation model through collaborative management.
Theme 3	***Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of the BLM's NLCS.*** Raise public awareness and understanding of the NLCS, cultivate relationships, promote community stewardship of BLM-managed public land, and provide for use and enjoyment of present and future generations.
Theme 4	***Building upon BLM's Commitment to Conservation.*** Promote a model of conservation excellence internally, through improved understanding and fully integrating the NLCS within the BLM.

The BLM recognizes that many of the goals and actions encompassed by the strategy are contingent upon available funding and resources. The highest priority action items for the next three years are indicated with a red rectangle. ▪ An implementation plan for this national strategy will be developed in fiscal year 2012 to help further prioritize the actions listed in the strategy. To help prioritize actions at the field level, each state office will develop a statewide strategy for NLCS areas under its jurisdiction, tiered to this national NLCS strategy. The national and statewide NLCS Strategies will also serve to guide development of implementation plans and strategies associated with NLCS units.

Theme 1

Ensuring the Conservation, Protection, and Restoration of NLCS Values

The NLCS lands are designated by Congress or the President to conserve, protect, and restore their unique values for the benefit of current and future generations. As such, there is an overarching and explicit commitment to conservation and resource protection as the primary objective within these areas. In this theme, we focus on ensuring that BLM management of NLCS lands is guided by the purposes for which the lands were designated and on using science to further conservation, protection, and restoration of these landscapes, while providing opportunities for compatible public use and enjoyment.

Goal 1A

Clearly communicate that the conservation, protection, and restoration of NLCS values is the highest priority in NLCS planning and management, consistent with the designating legislation or presidential proclamation.

1. Provide clear, consistent policy and guidance that affirms the primacy of the designating legislation or proclamation for all parts of the NLCS in planning and management. ▪
2. Provide guidance to ensure NLCS values are addressed and managed within BLM land-use plans and environmental review documents for projects. ▪
3. Provide land-use plan direction for Monuments and National Conservation Areas (NCA) by developing a stand-alone land-use plan, amending an existing land-use plan, or integrating the unit's planning process into a broader new or revised land-use plan. Each Monument and NCA shall have an independent set of decisions that explicitly apply to that unit.

4. Develop measures and conduct periodic management reviews to assess management effectiveness of Monuments and National Conservation Areas. Apply results of the reviews to adaptively improve management and share best practices.

5. In coordination with other BLM programs, establish conservation priorities for each NLCS unit based on the mandates of the designating legislation or proclamation and coordinate funding to maximize conservation benefits. ▪

Goal 1B

Expand understanding of the NLCS values through assessment, inventory, and monitoring.

1. In collaboration with federal and state agencies and other BLM programs, develop or compile, and maintain baseline inventory and geo-referenced data of NLCS values.

2. Conduct boundary assessments and compile geospatial data of NLCS area boundaries. Post boundary signs in high priority areas to inform the public and deter incompatible uses within NLCS lands. ▪

3. In partnership with other BLM programs, establish consistent protocols for monitoring NLCS values to better and more quickly inform management decisions and to assess operational effectiveness and performance.

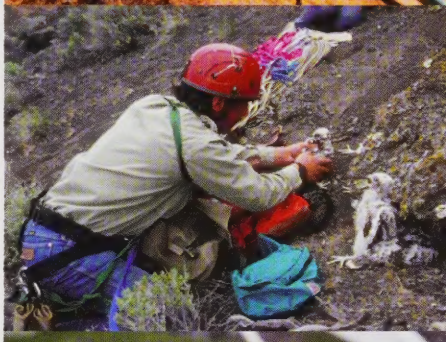
4. Work with partners and volunteers to conduct assessment, inventory, and monitoring of NLCS areas. Ensure that assessment, inventory, and monitoring data are readily available to BLM management and staff, as well as to scientists and the general public. ▪

Goal 1C

Provide a scientific foundation for decision-making.

1. In concert with the BLM National Science Strategy, develop and implement science strategies for NLCS areas (with emphasis on Monuments, National Conservation Areas, and areas of special scientific importance), as well as for the system as a whole, to identify research needs and incorporate physical, biological, and social science into management, decision-making, and outreach.

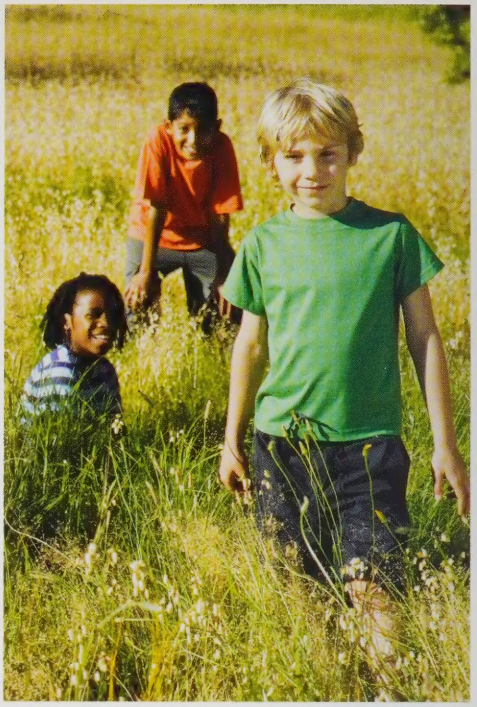
2. Promote the NLCS to universities and research institutions as a major research resource consistent with the protection of NLCS values. Emphasize projects that meet identified NLCS research needs.



3. Participate and more effectively utilize existing national networks such as the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) to support research and share scientific information that can be applied to NLCS management.

4. Promote a better understanding of the importance and value of science in decision-making and ensure that research results are readily available to BLM managers, staff, and the public.

5. Establish an NLCS Science Team to facilitate interagency and cross-directorate scientific collaboration, promote science, disseminate research results, and integrate science into NLCS and BLM management. Utilize the sound science and peer-reviewed scientific research developed by the US Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and other federal agencies and integrate this research information into the NLCS where appropriate.



Goal 1D

Use the NLCS as an outdoor laboratory and demonstration center for new and innovative management and business processes that aid in the conservation, protection, and restoration of NLCS areas.

1. Enhance the role of science partnerships in resource management and the engagement of the public to assist with scientific work (citizen science).

2. Promote use of the NLCS as an outdoor laboratory for enhancing conservation of natural and cultural resources, consistent with the designating legislation or presidential proclamation. Promote opportunities to share these practices (for example, online forums, publications, training, workshops, conferences) for application on NLCS and other BLM lands.

3. Use the NLCS to showcase emerging technology and innovative management practices.

Goal 1E

Limit discretionary uses to those compatible with the conservation, protection, and restoration of the values for which NLCS lands were designated.

1. Engage stakeholders through the land-use planning process and to identify existing and potential uses that are compatible with the designating legislation or presidential proclamation.

2. Use the best available science to conduct capacity studies, establish specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-specific (SMART) objectives (or similar), and develop monitoring plans for compatible uses to ensure the NLCS values are protected, consistent with the designating legislation or presidential proclamation. Use the monitoring results to adaptively manage the NLCS values.

3. Do not authorize discretionary uses that cannot be managed in a manner compatible with the designating proclamation or legislation. Work with the holders of valid existing rights to limit negative impacts to NLCS values. ■

4. Where NLCS units have a high conservation value in a broader context for a species population or ecosystem health, utilize NLCS units for mitigation for projects occurring outside the units, so that conservation efforts outside NLCS units can build upon conservation efforts within the units in order to conserve the entire species population or ecosystem.

5. Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to complete travel management plans for each Monument and National Conservation Area within five years of completion of the land- use plan. Provide for public access and opportunities (e.g. trails), including the needs of persons with disabilities while protecting resources.

Goal 1F

Manage facilities in a manner that conserves, protects, and restores NLCS values:

1. Consider development of visitor or information centers within local communities to foster stewardship, contribute to the local economy, provide for public safety and enjoyment, and minimize development within NLCS areas.

2. The BLM will only develop facilities, including roads, on NLCS lands where they are required for public health and safety, are necessary for the exercise of valid existing rights, minimize impacts to fragile resources, or further the purposes for which an area was designated.

3. Ensure that accessibility, environmentally friendly building materials, "green" technology, and energy conservation standards are incorporated into all new buildings and facility retrofits. Encourage use of exterior lighting that protects the dark night sky. Implement recycling and other environmental friendly practices in the workplace.

4. Remove abandoned, dilapidated, or unneeded facilities and structures that do not possess cultural or historic significance and restore the areas those facilities occupied.

Theme 2

Collaboratively Managing the NLCS as Part of the Larger Landscape

Recognizing that the NLCS represents a small portion of the land managed by the BLM and other federal, state, tribal, and local government entities, these special conservation areas must be managed within the context of the larger landscape. By establishing connections across boundaries with other jurisdictions, management of NLCS areas will complement conservation areas within the respective jurisdictions of the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge System, the U.S. Forest Service, state and local governments, private conservation lands, and other BLM land managed for resource protection through land-use plan designations. Collaborative management is also a major theme in the President's America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Report published February 2011. The BLM is implementing various AGO actions that will further enhance management of NLCS and other BLM lands, such as serving on the America's Great Outdoors Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation to coordinate recreation management, access, and policies across multiple agencies. Finally, taking a collaborative landscape approach to NLCS management provides better opportunities to promote healthy landscapes and contribute to the local economy and social fabric of the community.

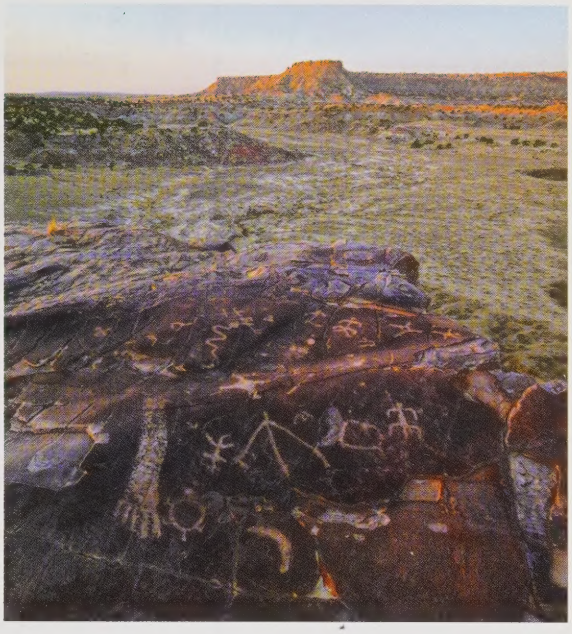
Goal 2A

Emphasize an ecosystem-based approach to manage the NLCS in the context of the surrounding landscape.

1. Use large-scale assessments, such as BLM's Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REAs), to identify areas where NLCS units are important for resource protection and conservation within a broader landscape context; such as providing for large-scale wildlife corridors and water dependent resources.

2. Maintain or increase habitat connectivity with other important habitat areas to provide for sustainable populations of native species.

3. Manage cultural resources within the context of the cultural landscape and adjoining lands to provide the greatest conservation benefit.



Goal 2B

Adopt a cross-jurisdictional, community-based approach to landscape-level conservation planning and management.

1. Coordinate across all BLM programs to more efficiently meet common goals, based on a common understanding of the designating legislation or presidential proclamation for a particular NLCS area.

2. Engage tribal, local, state and other federal government agencies and members of the public at the earliest opportunity possible in NLCS planning, management, and resource and geospatial data sharing, consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the Sunshine in Government provisions in Sec. 313 of FLPMA. To the extent feasible, use existing collaborative forums. ▪

3. Coordinate an annual meeting with the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service to share experiences and best management practices related to conservation area management.

4. Work with partners and communities to understand the effects of NLCS management and planning on adjacent lands, including social, economic, and ecological impacts. Participate in local planning and watershed analyses efforts to identify the effects of adjacent land-management on NLCS areas.

Goal 2C

Work with Congress, tribes, other federal and state agencies, and national and local communities to identify and protect lands that are critical to the long-term ecological sustainability of the landscape.

1. Utilize existing large-scale assessments and maps, such as BLM's REAs, wildlife corridor mapping effort, wilderness inventories, and other federal and state agency analyses to inform collaborative planning and land acquisition efforts. Develop a map identifying key habitat linkages among NLCS units and of other land conservation gaps in order to manage NLCS units within the larger-scale ecosystem and meet broad-scale conservation goals. ▪

2. Prioritize land acquisitions for possible funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Give higher priority to lands that enhance ecological connectivity and protect nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values.

3. Serve as an information resource for grassroots efforts interested in exploring possible designations through legislation pertaining to the NLCS and ensure a diversity of viewpoints is brought to the table, including congressional delegations, local elected officials, tribes, chambers of commerce, and other interested members of the public. ▪

Goal 2D

Adopt a community-based approach to recreation and visitor services delivery, consistent with the conservation purpose of the NLCS and the socio-economic goals of the local community.

1. Implement regional cooperative approaches to promote domestic and international tourism and to provide sustainable recreational opportunities and visitor services that enhance the natural and cultural heritage of a region and contribute to the local economy. To the extent feasible, utilize existing collaborative forums or regional recreation planning efforts.

2. Encourage partnering in the development and management of visitor and interpretive centers, facilities, and services in gateway communities in order to provide "one-stop shopping" for visitors and tell the story of the landscape and the community. Conduct periodic visitor surveys to assess visitor satisfaction and identify visitor needs.

3. More actively promote use of collaborative/cooperative law enforcement agreements with other federal, state and local agencies to bring in trained auxiliary rangers to provide visitor safety, protect resources, deter criminal activities, and investigate and prosecute crime.

Theme 3

Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of the BLM's NLCS

This theme seeks to cultivate a sense of shared stewardship for the BLM-managed public lands and advance the relevance of conservation lands to communities of place and interest. The goals represent a multi-pronged approach to connect diverse groups of people, interests, and government organizations by building strong partnerships, attracting volunteers, engaging youth, and telling our story through education, interpretation, and outreach.

Goal 3A

Launch a long-term public awareness initiative about the BLM's NLCS, including national and local outreach, communications, and media plans.

1. Coordinate with BLM engineering to develop standard guidelines for NLCS signs to promote consistency and public recognition.

2. Use publications, maps, site-specific brochures, websites, social media, and other tools to reach out to the public about the NLCS. Emphasize connections among local NLCS areas to the overall NLCS and to the BLM system of public lands. ▪

3. Increase use of the Internet and other available technologies to highlight recreation opportunities, offer reservations, and provide permits to recreation users.

4. Continue to support events that emphasize collaborative outreach and public awareness, such as National Public Lands Day, National Fishing Week, Great Outdoors Week, National Trails Day, and National Tourism Week.

5. Develop a national outreach and media plan that includes development of a brand and tag line for the NLCS as a whole. Promote a better understanding of why the NLCS areas were designated and the resource, social, and economic values of these areas to local communities. Work in collaboration with tribes and partners on outreach and media materials addressing cultural resources and other resource values. ▪

Goal 3B

Advance and strengthen partnerships to facilitate shared stewardship and to advance the relevance of the NLCS to communities of interest and place.

1. Develop a partnership strategy that identifies key areas for investment for developing a multi-pronged national program to encourage, expand and streamline developing and sustaining partnerships throughout the BLM. Include strategic applications for enhancing partnerships with NLCS Friends groups and non-traditional partners. ▪
2. Develop and provide NLCS staff, partnership program leads, Friends groups, and partners with relevant training and a partnership capacity-building tool box with reference materials and guides, to enhance successful collaboration efforts. ▪
3. Grow and foster strategic partnership opportunities, including expanding and further developing community and local area partnerships with non-profit organizations, Friends groups, youth-serving organizations, and other program interest groups. ▪
4. Foster, support, and nurture networks of partners and Friends groups to facilitate peer-to-peer capacity-building and learning opportunities through expertise, resource, and idea sharing. ▪
5. Through the Wounded Warriors and other veteran assistance programs, reach out to engage military veterans in activities on the NLCS. Where military installations are located in the vicinity of NLCS units, actively pursue partnerships to involve members of the military in activities on NLCS units.

Goal 3C

Expand use of volunteers within the NLCS.

1. Where practicable, plan for the use of volunteers and associated costs as part of the Annual Work Plan.
2. At sites with significant visitation, consider employing a full-time, trained volunteer coordinator to support an active volunteer program consistent with the BLM Volunteer Program National Strategy.
3. Fully utilize Volunteer.gov/gov to conduct targeted recruitment of volunteers.
4. Develop volunteer training programs in collaboration with educational institutions and other partners and provide incentives to expand the use of long-term, higher-skilled volunteers who work across all program areas.
5. Expand opportunities for the public to serve as volunteer docents, manage or maintain recreation sites, assist in research and monitoring efforts, and provide other services. Provide education and interpretation services at visitor centers through volunteers.
6. Host a National Public Lands Day event at all NLCS sites with significant visitation.

Goal 3D

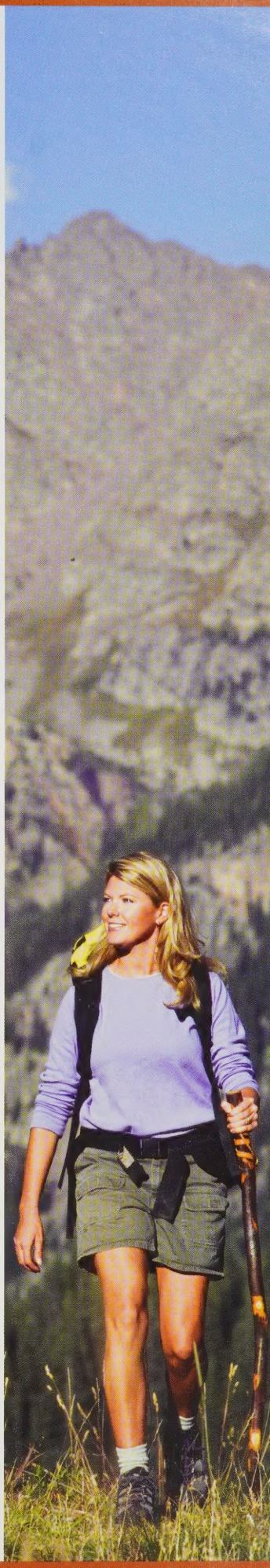
Engage the public in stewardship of the NLCS through education and interpretation.

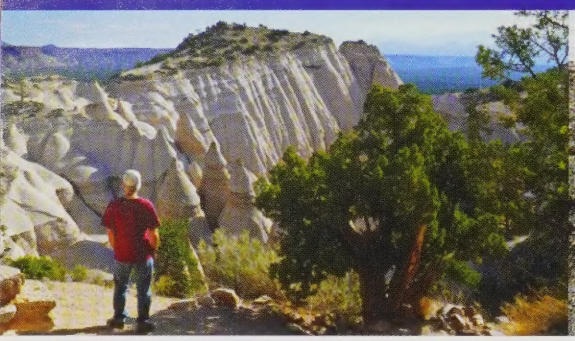
1. Develop a national strategy that provides a framework for site-specific implementation of interpretation and environmental education, building on existing agency programs such as Hands on the Land, Project Archaeology, and Take it Outside. ▪
2. Partner with local schools and educators to provide educational programs addressing NLCS lands and supporting local standards and curricula.
3. Work in partnership with other agencies, educational institutions, and non-profits to provide a variety of distance-learning opportunities addressing NLCS lands for teachers, home-schooled students, inner-city students, and others who may not otherwise visit the public lands.
4. Develop education and interpretation plans for priority areas within the NLCS that are based upon the national strategy.
5. Provide interpretive and educational tools and materials about the NLCS to commercial users (such as outfitters, guides, ranchers, oil and gas developers, etc.) who in turn may help educate their employees and the public about these lands.
6. Continue support for existing programs such as Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace to foster outdoor ethics and stewardship.

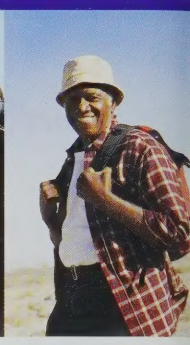
Goal 3E

Recruit and retain well-trained youth from diverse backgrounds for entry-level careers, and engage youth in recreation, education, and stewardship on conservation lands.

1. Identify science and resource priorities that youth – both college-trained interns and youth corps crews – can address through short- or long-term assignments. ▪
2. Identify occupations and skills that are needed for entry-level careers in the BLM and work with universities and other partners to train and recruit youth from diverse backgrounds for those occupations.
3. Assign trained mentors who will provide information on the conservation system and on career pathways in conservation lands management and the BLM to all youth working on the public lands.
4. Expand and enhance partnerships to provide youth, especially from underserved audiences, with opportunities to engage in recreation and stewardship on conservation lands and to learn about natural and cultural resources and land management.







Theme 4 — *Building upon BLM's Commitment to Conservation*

This theme outlines goals and actions to improve internal communication and facilitate intra-agency coordination in a way that aligns and fully integrates the NLCS program within the BLM.

Goal 4A

Improve internal communication and understanding of the NLCS and its potential to enhance the BLM as a whole.

1. Develop a communication package that highlights the NLCS vision, mission, and strategy and its role for internal BLM use by managers and program leads at staff meetings throughout state and field offices.

2. Capitalize on opportunities to communicate the NLCS vision, mission, and strategy at workshops, leadership team meetings, and new employee orientation and training. Participate in national, regional and state BLM program meetings to facilitate internal communication and more effectively work toward common goals.

3. Work with the BLM's National Training Center, the Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Center, universities, and others to develop training modules that explain NLCS policy and guidance. Incorporate these modules into the various training programs for employees, including training camps at NLCS areas. Provide training to ensure that NLCS values are addressed and managed within BLM land-use plans and environmental review documents for major projects that may affect those values.

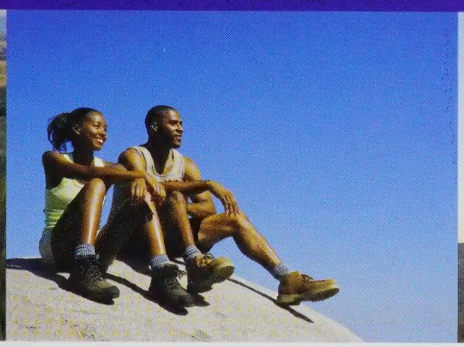
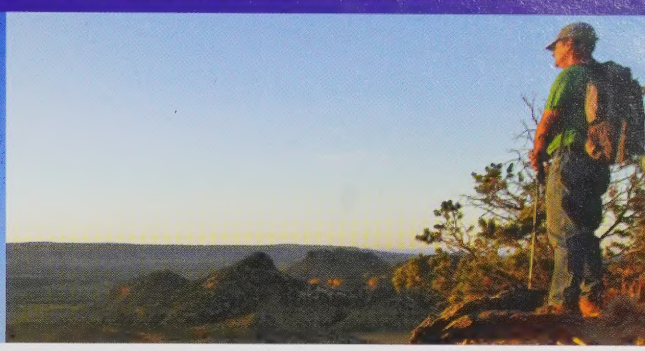
Goal 4B

Cultivate shared responsibility for the NLCS conservation mandate as an integral part of BLM's multiple-use, sustained-yield mission.

1. Work with the NLCS Management Advisory Team, BLM Executive Leadership Team, Field Committee, and Deputy State Directors to facilitate collaboration and to better integrate NLCS policies and management in the BLM.

2. Integrate NLCS into other BLM program manuals and policies and vice-versa to ensure consistent policy development and interdisciplinary implementation of programs and projects.

3. Develop and maintain an up-to-date implementation plan to help prioritize the actions listed in this national strategy. To help prioritize actions at the field level, state offices will develop a statewide strategy for NLCS areas under their jurisdiction, tiered to this national NLCS strategy.

4. As opportunities arise and funding permits, invite staff throughout the BLM to serve on details in NLCS area offices and Washington D.C. Make NLCS staff available to serve on details outside the conservation lands program.

Goal 4C

Clearly define, understand, and justify staffing needs, and administratively organize the NLCS areas to operate as a cross-cutting program within the BLM.

1. Maintain the NLCS as an integral part of the BLM. Assess NLCS workforce needs; identify roles and responsibilities for core staff, and capitalize on the expertise of state, district, and field office staff to assist in accomplishing NLCS work.

2. Identify a manager with decision-making and supervisory authority for each National Monument and NCA whose primary and major duty is to manage the monument or conservation area. A manager may serve more than one monument or conservation area. ■

3. Ensure that all states have a designated lead covering each component of the conservation system. The primary duties include budget development and execution, policy implementation, and support to the field staff. A person may serve as lead for multiple NLCS components. ■

Goal 4D

Ensure the NLCS budget is coordinated with the other BLM programs. Set clear expectations and procedures for interdisciplinary budget development, priority setting, and reporting of accomplishments.

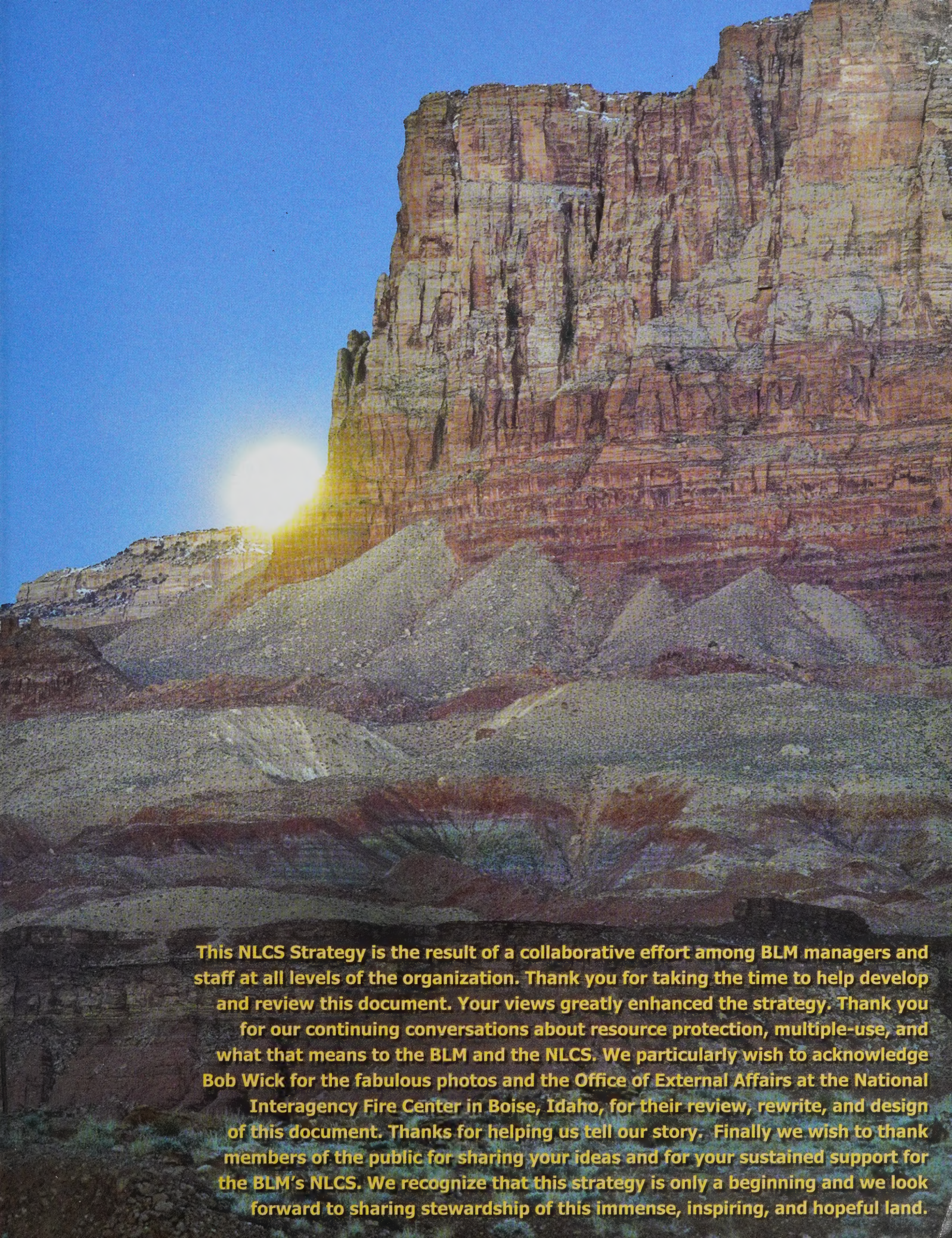
1. Develop and maintain an up-to-date implementation strategy (H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook, Sec. IV.E.) for each conservation area or grouping of areas based on the approved Resource Management Plan. The implementation strategy will serve as the basis for interdisciplinary budget development.

2. Develop and implement consistent standards for measuring and tracking NLCS accomplishments, including education, interpretation, partnerships, and volunteers. Integrate with related BLM programs. Report accomplishments in concert with other BLM programs. ■

3. Promote consistent use of funding codes to improve clarity and transparency in budget development and execution. Find ways to improve budget and performance tracking for NLCS areas that are funded by contributions from multiple subactivities.

4. Expand use of collaborative cost-share projects such as recreation fee collection, cooperative conservation initiatives, and other federal and non-federal programs to achieve management objectives for NLCS lands

Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, Arizona



This NLCS Strategy is the result of a collaborative effort among BLM managers and staff at all levels of the organization. Thank you for taking the time to help develop and review this document. Your views greatly enhanced the strategy. Thank you for our continuing conversations about resource protection, multiple-use, and what that means to the BLM and the NLCS. We particularly wish to acknowledge Bob Wick for the fabulous photos and the Office of External Affairs at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, for their review, rewrite, and design of this document. Thanks for helping us tell our story. Finally we wish to thank members of the public for sharing your ideas and for your sustained support for the BLM's NLCS. We recognize that this strategy is only a beginning and we look forward to sharing stewardship of this immense, inspiring, and hopeful land.

Glossary

Citizen Science is a term used for projects or ongoing program of scientific work in which individual volunteers or networks of volunteers, many of whom may have no specific scientific training, perform or manage research-related tasks such as observation, measurement, or computation. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizen_science)

Communities of Place or Interest broadly includes and is not limited to: local communities, gateway communities, national or local interest groups, Friends groups, cultural communities, business interests, and others.

Components of the NLCS include:

National Monuments are areas designated for conservation purposes either by act of Congress or presidential proclamation under authority of the 1906 American Antiquities Act.

National Conservation Areas are areas designated for conservation purposes by act of Congress.

Wilderness Areas are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System established by the 1964 Wilderness Act: *"A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."* Each addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System is specifically designated by act of Congress. Wilderness areas are managed by the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Wilderness Study Areas are areas with wilderness characteristics designated through the inventory and study processes authorized by Section 603 of FLPMA prior to 2003, or through the planning process authorized by Section 202 of FLPMA.

Wild and Scenic Rivers are rivers or river sections designated either by act of Congress or through the recommendation of a Governor and administrative action by the Secretary of the Interior. These rivers are designated to preserve their free-flowing condition and are not dammed or otherwise impeded. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was established through the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

National Scenic Trails or National Historic Trails are extended trails designated by act of Congress to protect their natural beauty or historic qualities. National scenic and historic trails are components of the National Trails System authorized through the National Trails System Act of 1968.

Other areas designated by act of Congress to be administered for conservation purposes include:

the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (Oregon);

the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (Oregon), Piedras Blancas Outstanding Natural Area (California), and Jupiter Inlet Outstanding Natural Area (Florida);

the Headwaters Forest Reserve (California); and

the Conservation Lands of the California Desert, which includes BLM-managed public land within the California Desert Conservation Area managed for conservation purposes.

Conservation is the "...harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment." (Sec. 103(c) FLPMA)

Cultural Landscapes as defined by the World Heritage Committee are distinct geographical areas or properties uniquely representing the combined work of nature and of man. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_landscapes)

Implementation Plan: Upon approval of the land use plan, subsequent implementation decisions are put into effect by developing implementation (activity-level or project-specific) plans. An activity-level plan typically describes multiple projects in detail that will lead to on-the-ground action. Activity-level plans are increasingly interdisciplinary and are focused on multiple resource program areas to reflect the shift to a more watershed-based or landscape-based approach to management. [BLM H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook, Section IV. A. (March, 2005)]

An **Implementation Strategy** is a useful tool to facilitate successful implementation of land use plans. An implementation strategy lists prioritized decisions that (1) will help achieve the desired outcomes of one or more land use plans and (2) can be implemented given existing or anticipated resources. Developing implementation strategies enables the BLM to prioritize the preparation of implementation decisions. A well thought-out implementation strategy should prioritize each decision for funding and implementation. The strategy should also be interdisciplinary (not program by program). Developing an implementation strategy creates an important opportunity for continued collaboration with the public, Tribes, state and local governments, and other Federal agencies. [BLM H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook, Section IV. A. (March, 2005)]

Objects and Values. The use of the term "objects" appears in the *American Antiquities Act of 1906* signed by Theodore Roosevelt which gives the President of the United States authority "...to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments..." The term "values" is presented in the *Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009* and often in the establishing legislation for individual NLCS units. Throughout this document, the terms "NLCS resources," "NLCS values," or "NLCS resources and values" are used in reference to NLCS objects and values.

Stakeholder is an all-encompassing term which includes a person, group, organization, elected official, or government agency interested, affected or can be affected by an organization's action. Examples include and are not limited to: recreationists, off-highway coalitions, hunting organizations, ranchers, energy and mineral interests, business interests, Resource Advisory Councils, Friends groups, partners, tourism boards, chambers of commerce, elected officials, schools and universities, and other federal, state, and local government agencies.

Sustainable Recreation are recreational activities that provide for environmental sustainability while fulfilling social and economic needs of present and future generations of Americans.

Appendix 1: The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009

TITLE II—BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

Subtitle A—National Landscape Conservation System

SEC. 2001. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) SYSTEM.—The term "system" means the National Landscape Conservation System established by section 2002(a).

PUBLIC LAW 111–11—MAR. 30, 2009 123 STAT. 1095

SEC. 2002. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—In order to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations, there is established in the Bureau of Land Management the National Landscape Conservation System.

(b) COMPONENTS.—The system shall include each of the following areas administered by the Bureau of Land Management:

(1) Each area that is designated as—

(A) a national monument;

(B) a national conservation area;

(C) a wilderness study area;

(D) a national scenic trail or national historic trail designated as a component of the National Trails System;

(E) a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; or

(F) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

(2) Any area designated by Congress to be administered for conservation purposes, including—

(A) the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area;

(B) the Headwaters Forest Reserve;

(C) the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area;

(D) public land within the California Desert Conservation Area administered by the Bureau of Land Management for conservation purposes; and

(E) any additional area designated by Congress for inclusion in the system.

(c) MANAGEMENT.—The Secretary shall manage the system—

(1) in accordance with any applicable law (including regulations) relating to any component of the system included under subsection (b); and

(2) in a manner that protects the values for which the components of the system were designated.

(d) EFFECT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this subtitle enhances, diminishes, or modifies any law or proclamation (including regulations relating to the law or proclamation) under which the components of the system described in subsection (b) were established or are managed, including—

(A) the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.);

(B) the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.);

(C) the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.);

(D) the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.); and

(E) the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

(2) FISH AND WILDLIFE.—Nothing in this subtitle shall be construed as affecting the authority, jurisdiction, or responsibility of the several States to manage, control, or regulate fish and resident wildlife under State law or regulations, including the regulation of hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational shooting on public land managed by the Bureau of

Land Management. Nothing in this subtitle shall be construed as limiting access for hunting, fishing, trapping, or recreational shooting.

SEC. 2003. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this subtitle.

Appendix 2: Secretarial Order No. 3308

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 3308

Subject: Management of the National Landscape Conservation System

Sec. 1 **Purpose**. This Secretary's Order (Order) seeks to further the purposes of the *Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009* (Act), which established the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in order to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations, and the President's initiative on America's Great Outdoors.

Sec. 2 **Background**. The BLM is the steward of many great American landscapes. As the population in the West continues to grow, there is an ever increasing need to conserve the open spaces that are a unique and priceless part of America's heritage. America's evolving land use needs resulted in the bipartisan passage of the Act. The Act permanently established the NLCS as an integral part of the BLM. The NLCS contains many of our Nation's most treasured landscapes, including scientific, historic and cultural resources, wilderness and wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, national monuments, national conservation areas, and scenic and historic trails, among others.

The BLM has the challenging mission of balancing the myriad competing land and resource uses, and remains committed to making the public lands and resources available for a wide variety of uses. This Order recognizes that conservation of this Nation's rich natural and cultural heritage is an equally important land management objective, and an integral part of the BLM's multiple-use mission. Conservation is a long-term investment that provides quality of life and economic benefits for current and future generations.

Sec. 3 **Authority**. This Order is issued in accordance with the authorities contained in: Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1950, as amended, 5 U.S.C. § 301, 43 U.S.C. §§ 1451, 1453; Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. § 1701 *et seq.*; and the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.

Sec. 4 **Policy**.

a. The BLM shall ensure that the components of the NLCS are managed to protect the values for which they were designated, including, where appropriate, prohibiting uses that are in conflict with those values. If consistent with such protection, appropriate multiple uses may be allowed, consistent with the applicable law and the relevant designations under which the components were established.

b. The NLCS components shall be managed as an integral part of the larger landscape, in collaboration with the neighboring land owners and surrounding communities, to maintain biodiversity, and promote ecological connectivity and resilience in the face of climate change.

c. Components of the NLCS shall be managed to offer visitors the adventure of experiencing natural, cultural and historic landscapes through self-directed discovery.

d. Science shall be integrated into management decisions concerning NLCS components in order to enhance land and resource stewardship and promote greater understanding of lands and resources through research and education.

e. The NLCS shall serve as a place to build and sustain diverse communities of partners and volunteers dedicated to conserving, protecting, restoring, and interpreting our natural and cultural heritage.

f. The NLCS shall recognize the importance of a diversity of viewpoints when considering management options. Accordingly, the NLCS shall be managed from an interdisciplinary perspective. In so doing, the NLCS shall draw upon the expertise of specialists throughout the BLM, in coordination with the tribes, other Federal, state, and local government agencies, interested local landowners, adjacent communities, and other public and private interests. When seeking these viewpoints, the NLCS must consider the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and any other applicable laws and regulations.

g. The NLCS shall endeavor to inspire the next generation of natural resource and public land stewards by engaging youth through education, interpretation, partnerships, and job opportunities.

Sec. 5 **Organizational Changes**. The BLM shall establish a new directorate, called the National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnerships, to replace the Office of the National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnerships. The BLM shall initiate the process to establish this directorate within 120 days of the date of this Order.

Sec. 6 **Implementation**. The Director of the BLM is responsible for ensuring implementation of this Order.

Sec. 7 **Expiration Date**. This Order is effective immediately and will remain in effect until its provisions are converted to the Departmental Manual or until it is amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever occurs first.

Ken Salazar

Secretary of the Interior

Date: NOV 15 2010

The National Landscape Conservation System

For additional NLCS information and maps, please visit the NLCS website at http://www.blm.gov/nlcs.

Additional copies of this publication are available from:

Chief, National Landscape Conservation System (WO-410)
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street, NW, Room 2134LM
Washington, DC 20240
Tel.: (202) 912-7170

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